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ABSTRACT

Information from the International Indicators Project of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Center for Educational Research and Innovation is used to compare completion rates of secondary and higher education in the United States with those of other highly industrialized countries, namely, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Compared to these countries, the United States has the most educated population, although 25- to 34-year-olds in Japan, Germany, and Canada have completed secondary education at rates similar to their counterparts in the United States. Young men in Japan were more likely to have completed higher education than men in the other industrialized countries, with young men in the United States second. Young women in the United States were more likely to have completed higher education than women or men in the other countries (with the exception of Japanese men). A table shows the percentage of the population completing secondary and higher education by age, sex, and country. Four graphs illustrate these findings. (SLD)

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INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

National Center for Education Statistics
Indicator of the Month, December 1993

TM021084

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INDICATOR of the MONTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

December 1993

International comparisons of educational attainment

The percentage of the population completing secondary and higher education in the United States and other highly industrialized countries provides an indication of the skill level of the U.S. workforce as compared to its economic competitors. Furthermore, contrasting the educational attainment of the general population to the attainment of younger age cohorts provides a means of comparing past and recent progress in the rate at which individuals complete high school or college.

- **Compared to other large industrialized countries, the United States has the most educated population. A similar or higher percentage of 25- to 64-year-olds in the United States has completed secondary school and college than in Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, or Canada.**
- **In Japan, Germany, and Canada, 25- to 34-year-olds have completed secondary education at rates similar to their counterparts in the United States.**
- **Young men in Japan were much more likely to have completed higher education than men in the other highly industrialized countries. Young men in the United States ranked second.**
- **Young women in the United States were much more likely to have completed higher education than women or men in other countries (with the exception of men in Japan).**

Percentage of population in large industrialized countries who have completed secondary and higher education, by age, sex, and country: 1991

	25-64 years old		25-34 years old					
	Both sexes		Both sexes		Male		Female	
Country	Secondary education	Higher education	Secondary education	Higher education	Secondary education	Higher education	Secondary education	Higher education
United States	83.3	23.6	86.1	23.7	85.7	23.5	86.5	23.8
Japan*	69.7	13.3	90.6	22.9	89.3	34.2	91.8	11.5
Germany	81.8	11.2	89.3	11.5	91.7	12.7	86.7	10.3
United Kingdom	65.3	9.6	79.2	11.7	80.7	13.6	77.6	9.8
France	50.5	9.7	65.9	11.6	67.3	11.7	65.4	11.5
Italy	28.2	6.1	43.1	6.6	42.3	6.7	43.8	6.4
Canada	75.7	16.7	86.0	17.5	84.6	18.0	87.3	17.1

* 1989 data.

NOTE: In the United States, completing secondary education is defined as completing high school; completing higher education is defined as completing 4 or more years of college.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Center for Educational Research and Innovation, International Indicators Project.

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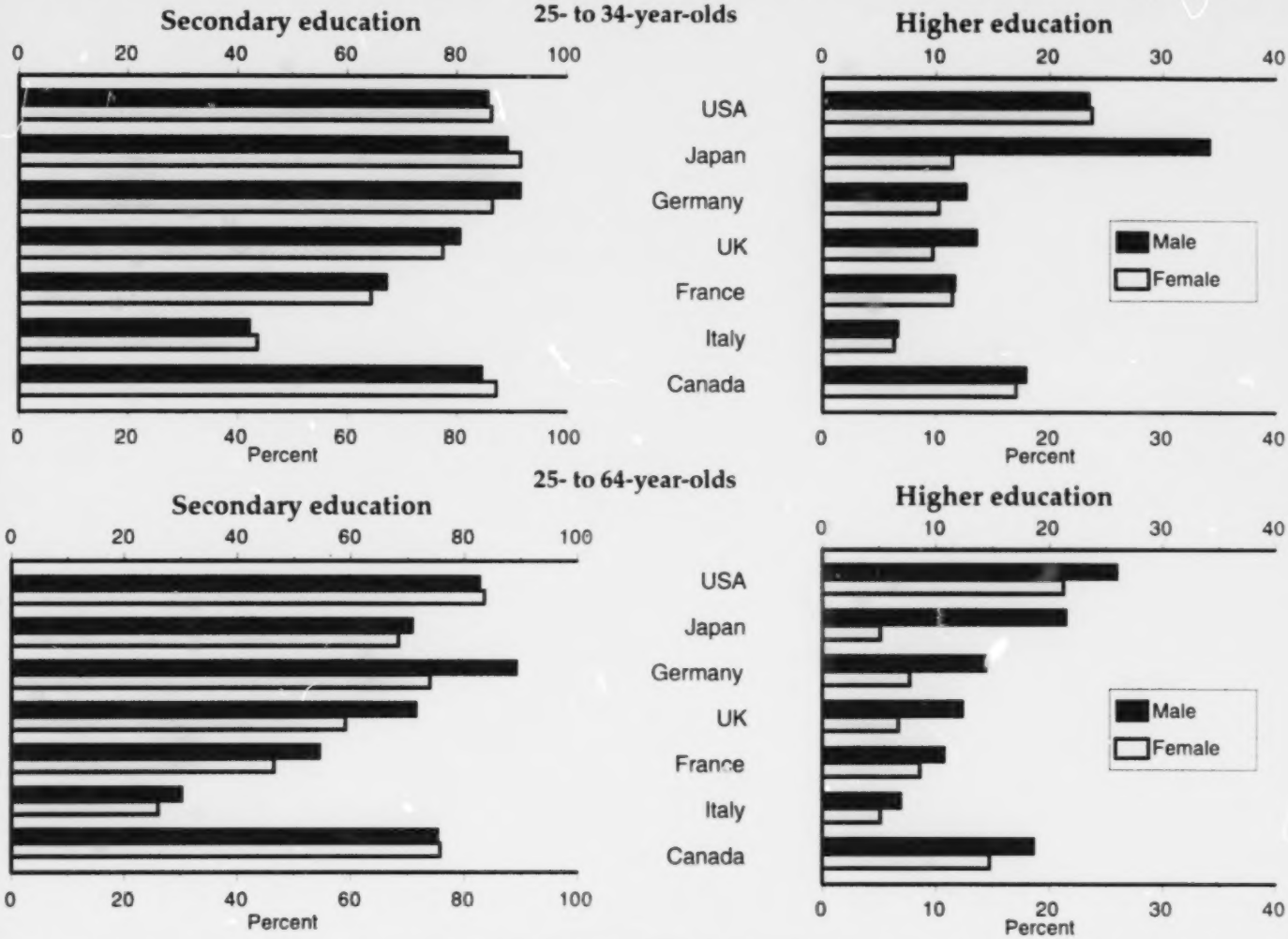
Percentage of population completing secondary and higher education, by age, sex and country: 1991



NOTE: In the United States completing secondary education is defined as completing high school; completing higher education is defined as completing 4 or more years of college.
SOURCE: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Center for Educational Research and Innovation, International Indicators Project.

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